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AUTHOR	Cohen, Audrey C.
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ABSTRACT

Society has traditionally discriminated against women in the educational and professional areas, and studies have shown that even talented and educated women are affected by what has been labeled "a climate of unexpectation." Colleges and universities, as part of their responsibility to build a new society, must play a major part in affecting attitudes toward women by changing their own programs and policies and eliminating discrimination against women faculty and students. This paper discusses some of the educational professional roadblocks facing women, as well as the negative policies of many universities, and concludes with a series of recommendations for reforms. These include: (1) policy and structural changes to promote increased involvement of women in academic life at all levels and in all fields; (2) program and service changes to facilitate life on campus for women, such as the provision of child-care facilities on campus, and campus health services for women; and (3) academic changes, including the institution of a series of courses or major programs of female studies. (AF)

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WOMEN AND HIGHER EDUCATION

Recommendations for Change

Audrey C. Cohen

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
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I. The Problem

"When you educate a man, you educate an individual, when you educate a woman, you educate a family". Thus our society aptly summerizes the prevailing attitude towards the education of women. More significantly, this statement reflects our society's basic concept of the female role. Women are viewed primarily as wives and mothers, not as individuals, and their education is thought of as preparation for these externally-oriented functions.

The current situation is the result of a subtle mixture of long-standing attitudes on the part of society in general, often reinforced by actual discrimination, and woman's own acquiesence. Several studies confirm the fact that even talented and educated women are affected by what has been labeled "a climate of unexpectation".(1) They regard careers as supplementary to their destined domestic roles and lower their intellectual and professional ambitions to conform to society's image. It is only the extraordinary individual, or the woman who "abdicates her responsibility" to her family, or the woman "unfortunate" enough (in the eyes of society) to have remained single and childless who shatters the conventional image. As one sociologist puts it: "Our best women - those in whom society has invested most heavily - underperform, underachieve and underproduce. We waste them and they waste themselves."(2) Obviously the reasons for the development and perpetuation of these negative attitudes about and by women

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are complex. But this does not alter the imperative need to change them. Today's increasingly technological society cannot afford to lose the skills and talents of any of its citizens. Nor can it continue to ignore the right of every citizen to the fullest possible intellectual development. Analysis of the problems of modern American women repeatly reveals that lack of outside, independent interests often has a seriously detrimental effect on the husbands and children of able, intelligent women as well as on the women themselves. As with blacks and other minorities, the corrosive effect of repression and lack of opportunity for women goes far beyond the individual.(3) The structures of society must be changed to allow every individual, whether black or white, male or female, the opportunity to develop and use his or her capabilities and, of equal importance, to be treated and compensated accordingly.

Such equality will only be achieved for women when every segment of society regards and treats them as full human beings and when women themselves become fully conscious of their rights and exercise them. Basic changes must take place in men's attitudes, in parental attitudes, in early schooling, in business practices, and, most essential of all, in the way women are presented in advertising and the mass media. Colleges and universities, as part of their responsibility to build a new society, must show the way. They can play a major part in affecting attitudes toward women throughout society by changing their own programs and policies to facilitate full participation by women, by eliminating discrimination against women faculty members and students, and by offering comprehensive educational programs on women, open to all students.

A. Educational Roadblocks Facing Women

It is a widely held belief in the United States that any woman can, if she wishes, plan, seek out, be trained for and maintain a career of her

choosing. The educational opportunities are there, if women will just take advantage of them. The facts do not support this belief. "Higher education in the United States was designed exclusively for the white, upper or middle-class male. Its procedures, its rigid uninterrupted timetable, and its cost all but prohibit its use by women..."(4) In practice women are pressured into making a choice between marriage and children, or advanced study and a career causing many women to lose out permanently. "Individuals and the society have both suffered from the fact that until recently it was difficult if not impossible, after the age of late adolescence to remedy lacks in education or to obtain training for a vocation. Failure to follow the prescribed order of educational experience was punished by not being given another chance - at least not easily or freely."(5) Although this situation is changing, it must change more rapidly and dramatically if women are to be served effectively.

Although girls constitute a majority of high school graduates, earn better grades and do better on standardized tests than boys, they are much less likely to go to college. Of all women capable of doing college work, only one out of four do so, compared to one out of two men.(6) This attrition increases at each level of graduate study. One summary of the studies on this subject concludes: "Women with B.A.'s are less than half as likely as men to earn a graduate degree, despite the fact that they have better undergraduate records on the average."(7) In 1968, women earned 42% of bachelors and first professional degree, 36% of masters degrees and only 13% of the doctorates.(8)

B. Professional Roadblocks

Many women go into teaching, but few are found at the college or university level. Fewer still are promoted to professional rank. A 1960

study of academic women showed that only 9.4% of the faculty at 20 leading universities were women, and they comprised but 4.7% of the full professors.(9) Academic women are most commonly found on the faculties of junior colleges, four-year public institutions (including teacher's colleges) and liberal arts colleges, rather than at high prestige universities.(10) Women faculty members tend to cluster in a few fields of study - education, home economics, the health professions & library science.(11) Predictably, women professors are extremely rare in those fields which our society has sex-typed as male, such as law and engineering.

Studies of individual institutions provide specific examples of these findings. At Stanford University in 1967 less than 5% of the faculty were women and they comprised less than 2% of the full professors.(12) Although one-half the men on the faculty were professors or associate professors, fewer than one-tenth of the women were in those ranks. 67% of the women were research associates, instructors or lecturers.(13) At Columbia University in 1968-69 there were no women professors in the schools of Law or Dentistry. Even at Barnard College, the women's undergraduate school, 78% of the professors were men.(14) A Columbia study also supports the widespread belief that women are not given tenure as readily as men. In the last decade, the proportion of Columbia doctorates granted to women has risen from 2% to 24%. Yet since 1957, just over 2% of Columbia's Graduate Faculties positions have been held by women with tenure, and these women of exceptional and distinguished scholarship.(15)

Not only are academic women concentrated in the lower faculty ranks and at less prestigious institutions, but they are paid less even when on the same academic level as men. As one goes up the academic ranks from instructor through to full professor, the salary gap between men and women faculty members in the same ranks widens increasingly. In 1965-66, at the instructor's

level, the median annual salary of women was $410 less than that of male instructors, at the assistant professor's level it was $576 less, at the associate professor's level $742 less and at the level of full professor it was $1,119 less. And if one examines the overall salary figures for teaching staffs of colleges and universities, women faculty earned a median annual salary of $7,732 while men earned $9,275 or $1,543 more than women.(16)

C. Negative Policies of Universities

Active discrimination is at least partly responsible for the failure of a high percentage of able women to obtain the education necessary for professional careers, and for the lack of women professors, particularly at major universities and in male-dominated fields. Two women's rights organizations have recently charged more than forty colleges and universities with a variety of discriminatory practices. Among the charges involved are quotas limiting undergraduate and graduate enrollment of women, discrimination in financial help for graduate study, discrimination in hiring, promotions and salary of women faculty members.(17) These formal charges have merely called official attention to what has been widely recognized as common practice at many institutions.

Behind these acts of actual discrimination against women lie less visible policies and practices that discourage or prevent women from pursuing academic studies and careers. The prevailing college and university structure presents an array of practical hurdles for women. Residence requirements, the inability to transfer credits, insistence on full-time study, lack of child-care facilities and inadequate health services are most frequently cited as problems that keep women from undertaking or completing their undergraduate and graduate studies. Unequal and inadequate opportunities for employment, advancement and compensation, including a lack of fellowships and travel grants, are additional pro-

blems for women seeking academic careers.

Women who surmount these obstacles find little reinforcement for their career ambitions at college. Not only are there few role-models, but course content blatantly neglects women. Studies in history, science, math and social science focus on the "world of man". While it is true that few women have had a prominent role in these areas of study, it is also true that even those few have been neglected by male historians, chroniclers and textbook writers. The woman's role, if it is examined at all, is studied only in the context of her traditional milieu, the family.

And finally, through their counseling and admissions policies, colleges and universities perpetuate the sex-typing of professions in our society. Even at the elite women's colleges, set up specifically for the intellectual development of women, counselors discourage women from applying to law, engineering or medical schools. The schools themselves have been reluctant to admit women in the belief that they would not utilize their training as fully as men. Women who insist on pursuing careers in these fields do so at the risk of "masculinizing" themselves, at least in the eyes of others. As a result of these negative pressures, only about one percent of the nation's engineers, dentists and surgeons are women. Sex-typing has also had an adverse effect on fields traditionally regarded as the province of women. The shortage of male teachers, particularly for boys, is now a matter of great concern, for example.

The problem has been summarized as follows: "Sex-typing tends to be a self-perpetuating process, operating according to the dynamics of the self-fulfilling prophecy. As long as certain occupations are defined as male, women who seek entry to them will be defined as social deviants and subjected to social sanctions. As a result, they will be less often motivated even to

consider professions defined as incompatible with women's other roles."[19] Thus, although overt exclusion of women is no longer practiced by medical schools, the proportion of women seeking admission continues to be low.[20] In one sample of 33,782 college graduates, there were 11,000 women who expected to follow careers in elementary and secondary education, but only 285 women who hoped to enter the combined fields of medicine, law and engineering.[21] Even at a time when shortages in some fields may be easing, it is detrimental to society to perpetuate these artificial divisions. The nation's colleges and universities are in a key position to break this vicious cycle.

II. Recommendations

A. Summary

Institutions of higher education must help all students develop a new image of women as human beings, capable of substantial contributions to the academic, scientific and political world around them. They must also begin to make the changes necessary to facilitate the full pursuit of education and professional training by women. While many reforms cannot be accomplished by a single institution and may require joint action by groups of institutions, or changes in national accreditation policies, there are three areas in which specific steps can be taken immediately by individual institutions. These are:

1. Policy and structural changes to promote increased involvement of women in academic life at all levels and in all fields.

2. Program and service changes to facilitate life on campus for women. Under this heading we are making major recommendations:

   a. Provision of child-care facilities on campus

   b. Campus health services for women

3. Academic changes. One major recommendation in this area is the institution at all colleges and universities of a series of courses or major

programs of female studies.

A. Policy and Structural Changes

Colleges and universities should re-examine all of their policies to see whether they are compatible with women's needs. We particularly recommend the following changes:

1. Admissions policies at both undergraduate and graduate levels should be redesigned so as not to penalize qualified women returning after an absence of several years. Credit transfers, residence requirements, even application forms and testing procedures should reflect new concern for individual situations and be designed to encourage women applicants.

2. Part-time study programs which would facilitate continuing education for women should be initiated or expanded.

3. Counselors and academic advisors should consciously seek to encourage able women, on the same basis as men to pursue graduate education in fields for which they show an aptitude, helping to counteract the prevailing attitude of society towards "male" and "female" occupations.

4. An intensive effort should be made to appoint qualified women to top faculty and administrative positions, as well as to the governing boards, in order to redress the existing imbalance. Women should receive equal pay for equal faculty rank and be considered for promotion and tenure on the same basis as male faculty members. Endowed chairs should be available to women as well as men.

B. Program and Service Changes

Colleges and universities should take certain practical steps that will facilitate life on campus for all women:

1. Child Care Facilities

The best way to free women to develop intellectually and to pursue

professional careers on an equal basis with men, is to establish child-care facilities at universities, in local communities and in places of work. Historically full day-care programs have been provided in the United States only during periods of stress, such as war-time, when women were required in the work force. The more recent surge of interest on the part of national and state governments in developing day-care facilities is primarily aimed at releasing mothers on welfare from the welfare roles. We are proposing that adequate child-care facilities be developed for children of all economic levels for the more far-reaching and humanistic purpose of freeing women to live fuller lives and to fill various roles in society. This effort should be launched immediately on university campuses throughout the country. Female students with children cannot function on a level equal with other students if they have to worry about child care in addition to their studies.(22)

The university campus is an ideal place to establish pioneering child-care facilities. These facilities could keep young graduate women students from dropping out, encourage the return of older women to complete or refresh their training and attract professional women who would otherwise withdraw from their fields for child-rearing to administrative, teaching or research positions. In short, for all women these facilities would eliminate the necessity of cheosing between marriage and motherhood and a career.

The entire college community could benefit from the presence of such a facility, for it should be open to the children of all members of the community. This would provide a varied and socially respresentative student body, and would at the same time free mothers with a wide range of skills and interests to participate in the functioning of the college.

A university child-care facility must be far more than a mere custodial institution. The first years of a child's life are of crucial importance

in determining his future intellectual, emotional and psychological development. These child-care facilities, perhaps operated in conjunction with university departments of education or psychology, could play a vital role in reshaping society, including its attitudes towards appropriate roles for boys and girls. Education and psychology students could do field work in these centers, thereby gaining valuable practical experience and at the same time helping reduce the costs of operation.(23) The facilities should be controlled, and perhaps even operated, by the parents themselves.(24)

Some universities might, in the course of experimenting with child-care facilities, attempt to provide full-time care similar to the Kibbutz in Israel. The parents would visit after work, on holidays and Sundays, while the actual child-rearing is left to mother-substitutes. This would free the women of routine child care and make it possible for them to pursue their studies and careers precisely as men do.(25)

2. Campus Health Services for Women

The typical campus clinic ignores the specific health needs of women and, to a large degree, reflects a somewhat Victorian attitude toward the female. In view of the radical changes in social mores and campus regulations which have been introduced over the past few years, college and university medical services should be expanded and updated.

In addition to the health services required by men and women alike, there should be available to the women on the campus a gynecologist/obstetrician to deal with regular check-ups and special problems, complete information on contraceptive devices, and a pediatrician. A special effort should be made to provide female doctors to serve female patients to ensure that questions in these areas are handled with sensitivity and understanding.

It would be particularly effective to have a course on health and

sex education offered as part of the female studies program described below and conducted in cooperation with the health services staff. The campus gynecologist could be responsible for conducting discussion groups or classes on the reproductive system, birth control methods and abortion procedures. With both information and health services available, as well as campus child-care facilities, the decision on the part of women members of the academic community on whether to bear children could be made on a far more informed basis.

C. Academic Changes

1. Female Studies Program

As subjects for serious academic study, the nature of women and their role in society have been neglected. A series of courses in this area open to all students would be one of the most effective ways in which an educational institution could combat myths and sterotypes about women, and help change women's own image of themselves and of their capabilities. It is important for women to re-evaluate all aspects of their lives, studying the assumptions that society has made about them, and the attitudes society has held which have influenced their own perceptions.

We recommend that such courses and perhaps even a major field of study be established at a wide range of institutions. There follows a brief outline of some of the areas such a Female Studies program could include, based in part on programs already being developed at several institutions. (26)

a. Woman's role in society - past and present.

The origin of the family as a cultural institution.

Diverse social structures and their significance vis-a-vis the role of women.

The universality of woman's role: inherent or dictated by men?

The popular image of the American women: myth vs. reality.

b. Health and Sex Education

This course should deal with all aspects of femal physiology and biology, and with the social consequences of being female. The topics would include study of the female reproductive system, pregnancy and childbirth, contraception, woman's biological relationship to men, and the various laws affecting women's health and well-being. The health and sex education course should be coordinated with the staff participating in the Health Services programs discussed above.

c. The Psychology of Women

It is generally agreed that little is known about the specific psychology of women, although many theories have been developed on the subject. A course should be given to explore the research and writings pertaining specifically to the understanding of women. Such topics as the following could be discussed: Myths and theories about women's psychology: Freud, Jung, Reich, Horney, Erikson, Spaak, Deutsch; Socialization of women and sex role training.

d. The Image of Women in Literature and Art

The image of women in subordinate roles in our society is reinforced and intensified in the works of our artists. A course should be offered analyzing the attitudes of major writers, painters and sculptors as reflected in their works, their influence on the arts and on the concept of women. For example, a comparative study, from a woman's perspective, of D.H. Lawrence, Henry James, and Sartre could be revealing. Doris Lessing's The Golden Notebook could be read together with Lawrence's Women in Love. The possibilities of studying cultural influences on attitudes toward women are almost limitless.

2. Research Program

It is generally conceded that there is a dearth of accurate, validated information about women. A special effort should be made to encourage research on topics related to women in all departments and special research institutes might even be established at selected universities. Topics such as Barriers to Education and Employment of Women and the Effects of Tracking and Socialization on Women's Aspirations, are only a few of the areas in need of comprehensive examination.

III. The Role of the Federal Government

There seems to be clear evidence that the Department of Health, Education and Welfare is itself guilty of over-discrimination in top level appointments and of insensitivity, at the very least, to the social needs of women. Well over half of the employees at HEW are women, but less than 20% of these women are in the upper ranks (GS 12 and above) that carry status, responsibility and higher pay. Women employees at HEW, as at other government agencies, have accused the department of discrimination and general lack of concern for women's rights. They are urging changes within the agency similar to those we have recommended for campuses. Specifically, in addition to day-care facilities, these women seek flexible hours, equal opportunity for promotion, and training programs that will enable secretaries and other lower-echelon employees to advance to professional positions. We believe that HEW must take every possible effort to meet these demands and to eliminate all discrimination in its offices.

In addition, HEW can play an active role in promoting change on the nation's campuses:

1. HEW must insist that colleges and universities fully adhere to Federal regulations that prohibit discrimination on the grounds of sex,

as well as race and religion, by any institution under contract to the Federal government.

2. We recommend that as a temporary measure over the next five years, 50% of all Federal fellowships, both undergraduate and graduate, be offered to women. These fellowships should be available for all fields, and held open until women have had a chance to apply for them. Only if qualified women do not seek them should these fellowships then be offered to male applicants.

The preceding proposals affect the lives of both men and women. In widening the role of women we enlarge in that measure the role of men, for men, too, suffer from a set of stereotyped roles. Implementation of the recommendations of this paper will serve as the first step in developing the potential of an influential group of both men and women who, in turn, will stimulate change throughout the rest of society. Only then will equal opportunity exist, for rather than developing one segment of the population at the expense of some other, all will benefit.

Footnotes

1. Dr. Mary Bunting, (President of Radcliffe College), Time, November 3, 1961, p. 68.

2. Cynthia Fuchs Epstein, Woman's Place. (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1970) p. 4. Dr. Epstein cites several authorities whose research indicates that intellectually superior girls lack strong committment to any career outside marriage, generally see themselves as helpers rather than leaders and hence pick jobs in helping roles, such as nursing.

3. Alice S. Rossi, "Equality Between the Sexes". Daedalus: The Woman In America. Spring, 1964, p. 623. Analyzing "the American woman's excessive and exclusive involvement with home and family", Dr. Rossi cites several studies to support her conclusion: "If enough American women developed vital and enduring interests outside the family and remained actively in them throughout the child-bearing years, we might then find a reduction in extreme adolescent rebellion, immature early marriages, maternal domination of children, and interference by mothers and mothers-in-law in the lives of married children."

4. Elizabeth L. Cless, "A Modest Proposal for the Educating of Women", The American Scholar, Fall 1969, p. 618.

5. Edna G. Rostow, "Conflict and Accommodation", Daedalus: The Woman In America, Spring, 1964, p. 748.

6. Alice S. Rossi, op. cit., p. 626.

7. Alberta E. Siegel, "Education of Women at Stanford University", The Study of Education at Stanford, Report to the University, Graduate Education, Part VII., Stanford University, March 1969, p. 84.

8. U.S. Dept. of Labor, Trends in Educational Attainment of Women, October, 1969, p. 16.

9. Journal of the American Association of University Women, 55 (Jan. 62), p. 102 as cited in Jessie Bernard, Academic Women (University Park, Pa: The Pennsylvania State University Press 1964, p. 191.

10. Jessie Bernard, op. cit., p. 85 (see footnote 9).

11. ibid, p. 126.

12. Siegel, op. cit., p. 85.

13. ibid., p. 87.

14. Rachel DuPlessis et. al., "Columbia Women's Liberation Report from the Committee on Discrimination Against Women Faculty", The Radical Teacher, (New University Conference, 622 West Diversey Parkway, Chicago, Illinois) Dec. 30, 1969, p. 30.

15. ibid., p. 32,

16. U.S. Department of Labor, Women's Bureau, Fact Sheet on the Earnings Gap, Feb. 1970, p. 3.

17. Nancy Gruchow, "Discrimination: Women Charge Universities, Colleges With Bias." Science, May 1, 1970, p. 559.

18. "Policies and Practices Should Reflect College Commitment to Equality". College and University Business, (McGraw-Hill), February, 1970, p. 79.

19. Epstein, op cit., p. 165.

20. Ibid., p. 168.

21. Rossi, op. cit., p. 639,

22. There are those who will argue that a woman who wants to continue her academic studies should not have a child in the first place, and that the college cannot be expected to take over her domestic responsibilities. Several responses are in order: 1) It is double crossing a woman to acculturate her into thinking motherhood is her highest fulfillment, and then use motherhood against her, as an excuse to frustrate her pursuit of other interests; 2) Many men students are fathers, but the fact of their fatherhood is not used against them when they seek further education. It is grossly unfair to expect wives but not husbands to sacrifice their educational development as a result of parenthood; 3) It is unwise in many fields, and their curtailed education, will, of course, curtail their availability to meet society's needs.

23. Brandeis University has developed a model plan integrating child-care into its academic program.

24. Wayne State University has a child-care center developed by the women of the Alumni Association. See College and University Business, (McGraw-Hill), Feb. 1970, p. 83.

25. The applicability of this kind of child-rearing to middle-class America is raised by Bruno Bettelheim, The Children of the Dream (London: The Macmillan Company, Collier-Macmillan, Ltd., 1969), pp. 52-64.

26. Columbia University and Cornell University have developed interesting experimental programs in Female Studies.